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Makerere non-teaching staff strike over pay

BY MARTIN KITUBI

MAKERERE University non-teaching staff yesterday went on a sit-down strike over what they called unfair salary increment among non-teaching staff in government universities.

This brought business at the institution to a standstill as libraries and laboratories remained locked.

The university compound and toilets were also dirty.

Through their umbrella organisation, the Public Universities Non-Teaching Staff Executives Forum, (PUNTSEF) and National Union of Education Institutions (NUEI) general assembly, the staff said they will continue striking until their demands are met.

The PUNTSEF general secretary, Bruce Twesigye, told *Saturday Vision* that it was unfair for the public service ministry to increase the salaries of some non-teaching staff at public universities to between 70% and 90% and theirs to only 17%.

Some of the non-teaching staff that were prioritised with much higher salary increments include directors, deputy directors, assistant directors, senior administrators, administrators and assistant administrators with salary structures of M3 to M7, at all public universities.

Those with salary structures ranging from M10 to M22 were university secretaries, librarians, laboratory technicians, cleaners among others.

"It is unrealistic for the public service ministry to distribute the budget like that, at least it would have increased all of us by 10%, but not others by 90% and some by17%," Twesigye said.

He added: "Secretaries, cleaners, librarians, need a fair treatment because we play the biggest role in ensuring that lecturers and students are in a conducive environment."

According to the new salary structure by the ministry, public university teaching and non-teaching staff were allocated about sh19.6b to cater for salary increment.

About sh12b of this money was allocated to teaching staff and sh7b to non-teaching staff at the 11 public universities in Uganda.

The secretary of NUEI at Makerere, Peter Okello, stressed that it was also "very unfair" for government to have sh19.6b for salary increment shared among the 11 public universities instead of eight.

"We requested for salary increments when public universities were eight without Kabale, Soroti and Lira universities. That meant that the Government was to instead increase the budget to cater for the new entrants on the list," Okello explained.

He added: "We do not want to earn the same salaries as directors or administrators, but we all need equality and fairness in resource and payment allocations."

Meanwhile, *Saturday Vision* has learnt that the ministry has appointed the director human resource to handle the matter.

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